

Message Text

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42

ACTION SS-25

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R 071153Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9253

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSSAG NKP THAI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 2403

EXDIS

CINCPAC EYES ONLY FOR ADMIRAL GAYLOR

USSAG EYES ONLY FOR GENERAL BURNS AND GENERAL HUNT

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR EAID MOPS CB

SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN STATUS REPORT - FEBRUARY 7

1. SUMMARY. THIS MESSAGE ADDRESSES ITSELF TO THE STATE OF
PLAY AS OF TODAY ON: (1) PLANNING FOR THE NEXT MEKONG CONVOY;
(2) TROOPS FOR THE LOWER MEKONG; (3) PHNOM
PENH SUPPLY STATUS; (4) AIRLIFT STATUS; AND (5) FUNDING.
END SUMMARY.

2. CONVOY PLANNING. THE NEXT CONVOY WILL BE IN ABOUT TEN
DAYS, EXACT DATE NOT YET SET PENDING NEEDED TROOP DEPLOYMENTS.
MEANWHILE, COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS ON THE LOWER MEKONG HAVE BEEN
REVISED AS FOLLOWS, EFFECTIVE FEB. 6. THE MEKONG SPECIAL
ZONE HAS BEEN MADE AN ARMY COMMAND (PREVIOUSLY NAVY)
UNDER BRIG. GEN. NOUP PARAMOUN, M.R. 6 GOVERNOR AND
COMMANDER. HE WILL HAVE A NAVY CAPTAIN AS HIS
DEPUTY AND A SENIOR AIR FORCE FIELD GRADE OFFICER AS AIR
FORCE ADVISOR. HE WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE A GROUND FORCE
OF 2 1/2 BRIGADES IN ADDITION TO FORCES DEFENDING NEAK
LUONG AND SUFFICIENT NAVAL ASSETS UNDER HIS PERMANENT
OPERATIONAL CONTROL TO SUPPORT LOGISTICAL AND ADMIN-
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ISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS OF GROUND FORCE UNITS AND POSI-

TIONS FROM THE VIETNAMESE BORDER TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF PHNOM PENH. HE WILL ALSO HAVE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF FOUR BFMS(NAVAL INFANTRY BATTALIONS). THE KHMER NAVY WILL RETAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS NAVAL SUPPORT BASE AT NEAK LUONG AND FOR THE NAVAL BASE WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE REESTABLISHED AT KAAM SAMNAR, JUST ABOVE THE BORDER.

3. IT IS PLANNED THAT THE NEXT CONVOY (TP-115) WILL BE AN ALL TUG AND BARGE COMBINATION, TO INCLUDE 3 AMMO, 2 POL AND 3 RICE BRAGES. THIS IS ATENTATIVE DISTRIBUTION, SINCE THE CONVOY IS STILL SOME DAYS OFF AND THERE MAY BE CHANGES IN AVAILABILITIES AND WILLINGNESS OF INDIVIDUAL TUG CREWS TO SAIL. OTHER DETAILS ARE STILL UNDER STUDY BY USSAG, AID AND OTHER INTERESTED ELEMENTS. MILITARY THINKING IS THAT THE ENEMY MINES, FIRST EMPLOYED AGAINST THE LAST TWO CONVOYS (ONE DOWN AND ONE UP), DO NOT PRESENT AN INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLME, PROVIDED THERE IS ADEQUATE SECURITY ON THE BANKS TO PROTECT MINESWEEPING CREWS FROM HEAVY ATTACKS BY FIRE WHILE ENGAGED IN THE SLOW SWEEPING PROCESS. THE KEY, THEREFORE, IS CONTROL OF THE BANKS.

4. TROOPS FOR THE LOWER MEKONG. THE PLAN IS TO REENFORCE EXISTING POSITIONS WHERE FANK FORCES ARE NOW LOCATED, AND TO OCCUPY, OR REOCCUPY, ADDITIONAL ONES SO AS TOALLOW MUTUALLY SUPPORTING ARTILLERY POSITIONS TO COVER THE ENTIRE LOWER MEKONG FROM THE BORDER TO PHNOM PENH. FANK FORCES, AND IN SOME CASES BFMS, WILL BE SO POSITIONED AS TO MAINTAIN UNIT COMMAND INTEGRITY (FOR EXAMPLE, TWO BATTALIONS FROM THE SAME FANK BRI-GADE WOULD OCCUPY A GIVEN POSITION). IN ORDER TO SECURE THE ADDITIONAL BRIGADE NEEDED FOR THIS PLAN, IT HAS TENTATIVELY BEEN DECIDED TO MOVE THREE BATTALIONS OF THE 69 THBRIGADE OF THE 9 TH DIVISION TO NEAK LUONG. THESE THREE BATTALIONS MUST BE GATHERED TOGETHER FROM THEIR PRESENT LOCATIONS AT KOMPONG CHAM, ON ROUTE 1, AND IN THE CITY. THEIR MOVE TO NEAK LUONG WOULD FREE THE 4TH BRIGADE, NOW TIED DOWN TO STATIC DEFENSE THERE, FOR REDEPLOYMENT TO POSITIONS ALONG THE MEKONG. THESE
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MOVES, WHICH WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE COORDINATION OF AIR AND NAVAL SUPPORT, ARE PLANNED TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE NEXT FIRE TO SIX DAYS, AND ARE A PREREQUISITE TO A SUCCESSFUL PASSAGE BY THE NEXT MEKONG CONVOY.

5. SUPPLY STATUS IN PHNOM PENH. RICE - 36 DAYS ON HAND AT A DAILY CONSUMPTION RATE OF 545 TONS. POL PRODUCTS: LAST WEEK CIVILIAN ALLOCATIONS WERE 258 CUBIC

METERS A DAY. THIS HAS BEEN CUT TODAY TO 121 CUBIC METERS PER DAY FOR THE NEXT NEXT WEEK, A 50 PERCENT REDUCTION WHICH WILL CUT EVEN DEEPER IN TERMS OF ORDINARY CIVILIAN CONSUMPTION OF GASOLINE. THE 50 PERCENT REDUCTION IN POL FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION MEANS POWER WILL BE RESTRICTED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR. UNDER THIS REVISED RATIONING PLAN, CIVILIAN POL STOCKS ON HAND BREAK DOWN TO: GASOLINE - 40 DAYS; AUTO DIESEL - 41 DAYS; INDUSTRIAL DIESEL - 49 DAYS; FUEL OIL - 126 DAYS; AVIATION GAS - 60 DAYS; JET FUEL - (JP-4 OR GP-1) - 55 DAYS. INCIDENTALLY, CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT ARE CONSERVING AVIATION GAS IN PHNOM PENH BY REFUELING IN BATTAMBANG AND KOMPONG SOM TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE.

6. MILITARY POL STOCKS INCLUDE: GASOLINE (MOGAS) - 15 DAYS; AUTO DIESEL - 30 DAYS; AVGAS - 37 DAYS; JP-4 - 63 DAYS. OBVIOUSLY IN A PINCH THERE WILL BE SOME BORROWING OF GASOLINE FROM CIVILIAN STOCKS.

7. AMMUNITION. MEDTC CALCULATES THAT THERE ARE 25 LINE ITEMS WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR AND THAT A 15 DAYS' SUPPLY ON HAND OF EACH OF THESE ITEMS IS THE ROCKBOTTOM MINIMUM FOR MAINTENANCE OF OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY. TODAY TEN OF THE 25 LINE ITEMS ARE BELOW THE 15-DAY LEVEL, INCLUDING SUCH CRITICAL ITEMS AS 5.56 MM (ORDINARY RIFLE) AMMO, 60 AND 81-MM MORTAR ROUNDS, 105 AND 155-MM HOWITZER ROUNDS. ON THE AVIATION SIDE, THERE ARE ONLY 6 AND 8 DAYS' SUPPLY OF NAPALM AND CLUSTER BOMB UNIT ORDNANCE. THOSE AIR MUNITIONS INDISPENSABLE TO MEKONG CONVOY SUPPORT ARE BEING RESERVED FOR TP-115.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 071153Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9254
INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSSAG NKP THAI

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 2403

EXDIS

CINCPAC EYES ONLY FOR ADMIRAL GAYLER

USSAG EYES ONLY FOR GENERAL BURNS AND GENERAL HUNT

8. AIRLIFT STATUS. THIS MISSION WAS HAPPY TO RECEIVE TODAY A COPY OF A JCS DIRECTIVE TO THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIRFORCE TO PROCEED TO AUGMENT THE BIRD AIR CONTRACT TO PROVIDE FOR 20 SORTIES A DAY WITHIN A CEILING OF \$1 MILLION. IT HAS BEEN CALCULATED THAT THE \$1 MILLION BUYS 740 MISSIONS, SO THAT IT WILL COVER AN ADDITIONAL 57 DAYS (BY ADDING 13 DAILY MISSIONS TO THE 7 COVERED BY THE EXISTING CONTRACT). HOWEVER, WE SHOULD BE UNDER NO ILLUSION AS TO THE EFFECT OF THE 20 MISSIONS A DAY IF THE MEKONG RIVER CONVOYS ARE NOT RESUMED. A LITTLE BASIC ARITHMETIC IS ILLUSTRATIVE: LAST WEEK'S AMMUNITION CONSUMPTION IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA ALONE WAS 640 TONS A DAY. FANK, WORKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH MEDTC, PLANS TO MAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO REDUCE THAT CONSUMPTION FIGURE TO 400 TONS A DAY FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AND THEREAFTER TO ATTAIN A FIGURE OF 300 TONS A DAY. THIS IS A HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC GOAL, WHICH MANY EXPERIENCED MILITARY OBSERVERS DO NOT FEEL IS REALISTICALLY ATTAINABLE. TWENTY BIRD C-130 SORTIES A DAY WOULD PROVIDE A MAXIMUM OF 300 TONS DAILY. OBVIOUSLY, THE ABOVE FIGURES MAKE NO ALLOWANCE FOR POL OR FOR GENERAL CARGOES (SPARE PARTS AND EQUIPMENT).

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NOR, NEEDLESS TO SAY, DOES THIS PROVIDE FOR ANY CIVILIAN CARGOES, SUCH AS RICE AND POL. THE ANSWER IS SIMPLY THAT THE MEKONG MUST BE KEPT OPEN.

9. FUNDING. THE \$1 MILLION AUTHORIZED FOR THE BIRD AIR CONTRACT IN TODAY'S MESSAGE COMPLETELY EXHAUSTS THE \$275 MILLION CAMBODIA MAP AUTHORIZATION. GENERAL FISH'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEB. 3 PROVIDES FIGURES FOR AMOUNTS OBLIGATED, BUT STILL REMAINING IN THE PIPELINE. HOW LONG THE ITEMS REMAIN IN THE PIPELINE DEPENDS OBVIOUSLY ON THE RATE OF SHIPMENT (AND THE COST OF THE MODE OF SHIPMENT). MEDTC BELIEVES THAT WITH THE STRICTEST OF AMMUNITION RATIONING MILITARY SUPPLY NEEDS COULD BE MET, IN THE ABSENCE OF FURTHER CONVOYS, WITH 40 C-130 FLIGHTS A DAY. THIS CLEARLY PRESUPPOSES ADDITIONAL FUNDING.

10. FINALLY, IT SHOULD BE REMARKED THAT THE POLITICAL SCENE REMAINS QUIET, WITH THE PRIME MINISTER APPARENTLY STILL PREOCCUPIED WITH GETTING MARSHAL LON NOL'S APPROVAL FOR HIS NEW ACTION PROGRAM, AS WELL AS FOR A NEW CABINET LIST. LOCAL ATTENTION IS INCREASINGLY FIXED ON THE MEKONG CONVOY PROBLEM AND INDICATIONS OF PROBLEMS FACED BY THE USG IN OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION REQUEST FOR CAMBODIA.
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